

For the record, my name is Robert L. Lubbers,
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I am a member of the Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society and a founding member and officer of the Yellowstone River Conservation Forum a duly authenticated 5013c organization.

The Forum, briefly, was formed in 1999, through the efforts of representatives of twenty-two conservation and environmental organizations in response to growing public concerns for that river and we now maintain as our principal focal point, communication and coalition building between the environmental community, government agencies, the agricultural community and most important continued association with the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council. The year before, 1998, the eleven conservation Districts, founded the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council to eliminate conflict between economic and conservation interests and provide leadership in managing the Yellowstone. Then and now, the YRCDC and the YRCF are cooperating on 3 basic precepts concerning the river with the guiding one being there is a "need for sound scientific information on which to base management decisions for the river." I think this statement echoes throughout HB455.

The Forum's vision for the Yellowstone is "to conserve a dynamic, free-flowing naturally functioning River system characterized by healthy riparian areas, fish, wildlife and clean water..."

There is more but that statement elicits our approval of this bill under its Section 2(1) intent: "provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion and degradation of natural resources and in (c) "the state has a duty and legitimate interest in protecting the integrity of its rivers."

Also HB455's preamble states ~~and~~ and finds our complete agreement as it "authorizes streamside management areas and vegetated buffers" and "prohibit certain activities within streamside management areas..."

This bill is timely and needed. And will help local jurisdictions and state agencies to more efficiently and prudently protect and conserve all our rivers in effect giving them "room to roam" as the Forum's vision and Charter state it.

This bill might ultimately be seen as something of a landmark, as it establishes management and protection for the 10 listed rivers. It may or may not add another jurisdictional layer to river management--i.e. currently 18 federal and state agencies and 11 cities and towns have some administrative responsibility for the Yellowstone alone---but in our view unequivocally, it is

a laudable step toward “modifying building and construction infrastructure and altering vegetation that impacts water quality” along those rivers.

I wish to thank the committee for their consideration of this bill. The twenty-two cooperating groups of the Yellowstone River Forum support this bill and urge your approval.

Thank you

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